



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



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## **A Different Kind of Graduation at the Capitol**

### **Parents to receive diplomas from civics and leadership program**

About 130 parents from towns and cities across Connecticut will graduate **Saturday, June 24**, from a first-of-its-kind family civics program, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI).

The graduates – from Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Meriden, New London, Norwalk, Stamford, and Waterbury as well as Middlesex County – will receive diplomas after putting in more than 100 hours to develop the skills needed to become education leaders in their communities.

The Connecticut Commission on Children, state business leaders, and the American Leadership Forum founded PLTI 14 years ago, after two things became apparent: 1) that too many parents lacked the skills to get involved in civic affairs, and 2) that they desperately *wanted* to get involved. PLTI is designed to teach parents how community change occurs.

The course requirements include community projects of the students' choosing, and this year's graduates did everything from raise funds for renovation of their local library to launch mentoring programs. (See the attached fact sheet for more on the curriculum.)

Milagrosa "Millie" Seguinot, one of Saturday's graduates, led her neighbors at Yale Street Commons in Bridgeport in the creation of an after-school and mentoring program there. Elderly residents watch the younger children and make sure they do their homework; high school students are on hand to offer tutoring. Thanks to her PLTI training, Millie recently secured a \$500 grant for the program.

"PLTI gave me the opportunity to start this and make it a reality," she said. "It's such a great program. I consider myself a very successful leader."

Commission on Children Executive Director Elaine Zimmerman said many parents want to become community leaders but aren't sure how to go about it. "Parents who work two or sometimes three jobs just to keep their children clothed, fed, and housed also worry about whether their kids are getting good educations," she said. "PLTI gives them empowerment through democracy skills."

Saturday's graduation ceremonies will begin at **11 a.m.** in the atrium of the Legislative Office Building, at 300 Capitol Avenue in Hartford. Eddie Davis, who retires this year as superintendent of schools in Danbury, will deliver the graduation address. PLTI graduates will present musical interludes. Photography is welcome and parents will be available afterward for interviews.



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Facts About...  
The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

**What is PLTI?**

PLTI enables parents to become advocates for children. It is designed by the Connecticut Commission on Children, in conjunction with the American Leadership Forum and Leadership Greater Hartford. The cornerstones of the program are respect, validation, and a belief that when the tools of democracy are understood, the public will become active participants in communities.

**What is the curriculum?**

Parents take a 20-week course that includes:

- a retreat to develop group communication;
- 10 weeks of classes on self and perception of leadership;
- 10 weeks on practicing democracy skills; and
- a community project of the student's choosing.



PLTI logo

Also addressed in the course: understanding personal history and its impact on perceptions of leadership; thriving with diversity; thinking critically; using the media; being an effective public speaker; using benchmarks and outcome measures; forming useful coalitions and building community; dealing with opposition; understanding policy and municipal budgets; and becoming familiar with city, state and federal law.

**How do we know PLTI works?**

A longitudinal evaluation by the University of New Hampshire revealed exceptional outcomes for graduates:

- 93% reported working in the community with people different from themselves;
- 9% started voting;
- 15% got new jobs;
- 20% returned to school for advanced education;
- 30% developed new community coalitions; and
- 21% were involved in improving school policies.

**Which Connecticut communities have PLTI classes?**

Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New London, Norwalk, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windsor, as well as all of Middlesex County.

**Where can I learn more?**

Visit [www.cga.ct.gov/coc/plti.htm](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/plti.htm) or call the Commission on Children at (860) 240-0290.